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Young Climate Change Plaintiffs Ask Washington Supreme Court To Hear Their Case

SEATTLE – Today, attorneys for 13 young plaintiffs in [Aji P. v. State of Washington](#) filed a petition for review with the Washington State Supreme Court to get their constitutional climate change case heard in court.

Despite acknowledging that “the right to a stable environment should be fundamental,” that “climate change poses a very serious threat to the future stability of our environment,” and that “the federal and state governments must act now to address climate change,” the Washington State Court of Appeals ruled on Feb. 8 that the case presents a political question rather than one that should be decided in a courtroom.

“The Court of Appeals’ decision violates long-standing U.S. and Washington Supreme Court precedent that holds courts have the duty and power to declare what the constitution requires,” said Andrea Rodgers, senior litigation attorney at [Our Children's Trust](#) and attorney for the plaintiffs. “We believe the Washington Supreme Court will be interested in reviewing and correcting the legal errors in this decision because it prevents the judicial branch from engaging in climate change cases at a time when its participation is essential. When future generations look back and wonder what was done to protect their future during this critical time, I hope they can see that the judicial branch did everything within its power to protect the constitutional rights for our children and future generations.”

The lawsuit, [filed in 2018](#), names the state, Gov. Jay Inslee, and several state agencies as defendants. It claims that actions the defendants are taking make the climate crisis worse and cause the youth plaintiffs harm. The complaint asserts that in causing climate change, Washington has violated the youngest generation’s constitutional rights to life, liberty, property and equal protection of the law, and has caused impairment of essential public trust resources.

The plaintiffs seek a declaration of their fundamental rights to life, liberty, and a healthful and pleasant environment -- and thereafter a government-created plan to comprehensively address the crisis. The right to a healthful and pleasant environment is the only right in Washington the legislature and the electorate have characterized as “fundamental and inalienable.”

[Aji P. v. State of Washington](#) is one of several youth-led climate change lawsuits brought by [Our Children's Trust](#). Other state cases include [Held v. State of Montana](#), [Sagoonick v. State](#)

[of Alaska](#) and [Reynolds v. State of Florida](#). Our Children's Trust also represents the youth plaintiffs behind the landmark federal constitutional climate lawsuit, [Juliana v. United States](#), which was brought by 21 young Americans and the youth-led climate organization, Earth Guardians.

Our Children's Trust is a nonprofit public interest law firm that provides strategic, campaign-based legal services to youth from diverse backgrounds to secure their legal rights to a safe climate. We work to protect the Earth's climate system for present and future generations by representing young people in global legal efforts to secure their binding and enforceable legal rights to a healthy atmosphere and stable climate, based on the best available science. We support our youth clients and amplify their voices before the third branch of government in a highly strategic legal campaign that includes targeted media, education, and public engagement work to support the youths' legal actions. Our legal work – guided by constitutional, public trust, human rights laws and the laws of nature – aims to ensure systemic and science-based climate recovery planning and remedies at federal, state, and global levels.

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